

U. S. Department of
Homeland Security

United States
Coast Guard



Commander,
Eighth Coast Guard District

500 Poydras St
New Orleans, LA 70130-0001
Staff Symbol: D8d
Phone: (504) 589-6298
FAX: (504) 589-2877

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

U. S. COAST GUARD

STATEMENT OF

**REAR ADMIRAL ROBERT F. DUNCAN
COMMANDER, EIGHTH COAST GUARD DISTRICT
NEW ORLEANS, LA**

ON

**PROTECTING OUR COMMERCE:
ENHANCING THE SECURITY OF AMERICA'S PORTS AND
INLAND WATERWAYS**

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI

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Introduction

Good morning Mr. Chairman and distinguished Members of the Committee. It is a pleasure to be here today to discuss the Coast Guard's role in enhancing the security of America's ports and inland waterways in order to facilitate the safe and efficient flow of commerce.

On 9/10/01, our primary maritime focus was on the safe and efficient use of America's waterways. Since 9/11, we have made great progress in securing America's waterways, while continuing to facilitate the safe and efficient flow of commerce. There is no doubt that work remains, but there is also no doubt that we continue to improve maritime homeland security each and every day – thanks in large part to the continued strong cooperation with the domestic and international maritime industry as well as many US federal, state, and local agencies.

Reducing Maritime Risk

The Coast Guard's overarching security goal is to prevent terrorist attacks within or exploitation of the U.S. maritime domain. Doing so requires a risk-based approach to identifying and intercepting threats well before they reach U.S. shores. We do that by using intelligence information and by conducting layered, multi-agency security operations nationwide; while strengthening the security posture and reducing the vulnerability of our ports, with particular focus on our militarily and economically strategic ports. Using threat, vulnerability and consequences as a general model, is fundamental to managing risks associated with terrorist attack while retaining our quality of life.

The Eighth Coast Guard District

The Eighth Coast Guard District, headquartered in New Orleans, covers all or part of 26 states throughout the Gulf Coast and heartland of America. It stretches from the Appalachian Mountains and Chattahoochee River in the east to the Rocky Mountains in the west, and from the U.S.-Mexico border and the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border in North Dakota, which includes 15,490 miles of coastline and 10,300 miles of inland navigable waterways.

In a typical year, the men and women of the Eighth Coast Guard District are involved in more than 6,300 search and rescue cases - saving 770 lives, assisting 7,900 mariners and saving \$37.5 million in property. The district maintains 24,000 aids-to-navigation, responds to more than 4,200 marine environmental pollution incidents and conducts more than 1,500 law-enforcement boardings.

The ports of New Orleans and Houston, located in the Eighth District, are two of the busiest shipping ports in the nation, with more than two million barrels of oil and one million tons of cargo imported daily. Seventeen of the top 40 busiest U.S. ports by tonnage are located in the Eighth District. These ports are part of an international supply and delivery system that brings an extremely wide range of materials and goods into the country and exports an equally wide range of commodities from the United

States. Imports include crude oil for our refineries, liquefied natural gas (LNG), bulk minerals and finished products. Exports include grains, refined petroleum products and chemicals just to name a few.

There are more than 6,500 oil and gas producing wells, along with 130 mobile offshore drilling units in the Gulf of Mexico that keep the district's Marine Safety program gainfully employed. Five of the top seven fishing ports in the country are located in the district. They account for nearly 40 percent of the catch of U.S. commercial fishermen.

The Western Rivers consists of 41 rivers and lakes across 18 states and encompasses the heartland of the United States. The Western Rivers centers on the Mississippi River and its major tributaries, including the Ohio, Illinois, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Cumberland Rivers (over 10,300 miles of navigable waterways). The states of Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, Kentucky, Nebraska, Tennessee, Indiana, Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Illinois, Minnesota and Wisconsin are all part of my area of responsibility. The Western Rivers waterways are vital in moving bulk cargoes and manufactured goods for foreign and domestic commerce. These rivers have provided a channel into the nation's heartland, connecting the Gulf Coast with the coal and steel industries of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and the grain exporters of the Twin Cities, Minnesota.

Charged with protecting this vast swath of America's heartland are approximately 3,956 active duty and selected reserve members geographically located in the district. There are also 6,000 volunteer Coast Guard Auxiliarists and 254 civilian personnel located in the district. I would specifically like to note that Coast Guard Auxiliarists are playing an increasing role in maritime security by their assistance to local Captains of the Ports (COTPs). While unarmed and not performing any law enforcement missions, these citizens act as tremendous force multipliers and have proven themselves invaluable.

Maritime Security for America's Heartland

The Coast Guard's strategy for maritime security consists of four primary pillars:

- Enhance Maritime Domain Awareness;
- Create & Oversee a Maritime Security Regime;
- Increase Operational Presence; and
- Improve Response and Recovery Posture

While I will not detail all the Coast Guard is doing in support of this strategy, I would like to highlight a few issues specific to the Eighth District.

Enhancing Awareness

Aligned closely to the ISPS code, the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002 (MTSA) implements domestic regulations for US vessels and US port facilities mirroring those required for foreign vessels and foreign ports. This includes the establishment of maritime security (MARSEC) levels that correspond to the international system and correlate to the Homeland Security Advisory System (HSAS) used throughout the United States. Additionally, MTSA required the implementation of regulations requiring the use of Automated Information Systems (AIS) on all foreign flag and most US flag commercial vessels transiting regulated Vessel Traffic Service areas. AIS allows the Coast Guard to electronically track the movement of vessels as they transit US waters in US ports. In the Eighth District, we have also installed additional AIS tracking receivers on offshore oil production platforms in the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) in an initiative to further push out our borders. Much like the Distant Early Warning (DEW) System of the Cold War, this GOM "DEW Line" extends the Coast Guard's vessel tracking capabilities into the reaches of international waters greatly improving maritime domain awareness. Other sensors will be added to the system.

In 2002, the Eighth Coast Guard District and the State of Louisiana co-sponsored the Louisiana River Watch Program. Based on the tenets of the Neighborhood Watch Program, this awareness program asks those who work, live, or recreate on or near the water to be aware of suspicious activity that might indicate threats to our country's homeland security. Citizens are urged to adopt a heightened sensitivity toward unusual events or individuals they may encounter in or around ports, docks, marinas, riversides, beaches, or communities. Anyone observing suspicious activity is simply asked to note details and contact local law enforcement. In 2004, the Coast Guard expanded the Louisiana River Watch and other similar programs to the national level and is calling it America's Waterway Watch. This collective national action is designed to increase the awareness of all Americans to suspicious activities on or near our coastlines and river systems.

In yet another Eighth Coast Guard District initiative, the Inland River Vessel Movement Center (IRVMC) was created. IRVMC was established in FY2003 to help develop greater maritime domain awareness on the Western Rivers through the tracking of Certain Dangerous Cargoes (as specified by regulation) that are carried in barges. Each year IRVMC tracks over 36,000 transits of barges carrying these hazardous cargoes, at 94 individual reporting points, over 10,300 miles of the inland rivers, including thousands of transits through High Density Population Areas. The location of barges carrying specified cargos is reported to the IRVMC either electronically or manually. IRMVC provides this information to the inland river COTPs. The COTPs then are able to schedule security boardings and escorts based on individual risks associated with the movement of the cargo through specific regions of the country. The information provided by IRVMC is essential to the Western Rivers Maritime Security mission and provides the only MDA within the inland rivers system.

Create & Oversee an Effective Maritime Security Regime

The U.S. commercial vessel (including tank barges) fleet and U.S. maritime waterfront facilities are the heart and soul of the maritime industry. Under the MTSA, each vessel and each facility is now required to be operating under a Coast Guard approved security plan. Again, like the ISPS code, these security plans are designed to ensure the vessel is secure and under the positive control of the assigned crew. Security plans require each facility to implement mandatory access control measures to ensure that only authorized persons are able to gain access. Plan requirements establish designated restricted areas within the facility gates and screening protocols for ensuring that cargo-transport vehicles and persons entering the facilities are inspected to deter the unauthorized introduction of dangerous substances and devices. Vessel and facility owners are fully responsible and accountable for full security of their infrastructure and operations. To date, the US Coast Guard has reviewed and approved over 9,600 domestic vessel security plans and 3,100 domestic facility security plans. The Eighth Coast Guard District is responsible for 5,447 or 57% of the domestic vessels, and 1,291, or 42%, of the domestic facilities. Coast Guard personnel have inspected every single facility required to have a security plan to verify that they are operating in compliance with their approved plan. Additionally, Coast Guard personnel are in the process of examining every U.S. vessel required to have a security plan to verify that they too are operating in compliance with their approved plans.

Improve Response and Recovery Posture

The Western Rivers Area Maritime Security (AMS) Committee was chartered on January 30, 2004, in accordance with 33 CFR 103.300(b). The AMS Committee provides a forum for port stakeholders in the Western Rivers Region to work together in facilitating the Coast Guard's Ports, Waterways, and Coastal Security (PWCS) mission to deter, detect, prevent and respond to attacks against U.S. territory, population, and critical maritime infrastructure.

The AMS Committee functions as the regional AMS Committee for the Western Rivers Region. As such, it incorporates the geographic boundaries of the Captain of the Port (COTP) zones of Pittsburgh,

Huntington, Paducah, Louisville, St. Louis, and Memphis, as described below. In addition, certain rivers portions of the COTP zones of Chicago, Mobile, and New Orleans are incorporated into the Committee. The AMS Committee is comprised of an “Executive Steering Committee” of voting members, and “At-Large” non-voting members. The Committee serves as an oversight body for the Area Maritime Security Subcommittees within the region that operate under the COTPs. The COTPs remain the Federal Maritime Security Coordinators (FMSC) for their respective COTP zones described in 33 CFR Part 3, including all ports and areas located therein, and oversee all AMS Subcommittee activities.

The AMS Committee coordinates maritime security activities among Western Rivers COTP zones to assure consistency in:

- (1) Identifying critical port infrastructure and operations.
- (2) Identifying risks (threats, vulnerabilities, and consequences).
- (3) Determining mitigation strategies and implementation methods.
- (4) Developing and describing the process to continually evaluate overall port security.

Additionally the AMS Committee prepares and maintains the Western Rivers Area Maritime Security Plan, hereinafter referred to as the “WRAMS Plan,” incorporating annexes developed by the COTPs. The WRAMS Plan addresses port security issues and security operating procedures common to all COTP offices in the region. The AMS Committee does provide a regional focus to the COTPs in their efforts to complete risk-based AMS assessments and assist the COTPs in developing, reviewing, and updating their individual annexes to the AMS Plan.

The AMS Committee provides guidance to individual AMS Subcommittees throughout the region and fosters a system-wide approach to maritime security within the region that emphasizes regional strategies and resources. Finally, the AMS committee serves as a link in communicating threats and changes in Maritime Security (MARSEC) levels, and disseminating security information to the AMS Subcommittees through the COTPs.

Membership of the Executive Steering Committee consists of representatives from:

- Eighth Coast Guard District Inland Waterways Coordinator
- Transportation Security Administration
- Bureau of Customs and Border Protection
- Maritime Administration
- U.S.A.C.E. Mississippi Valley Division and Great Lakes and Ohio River Division
- Transportation Command
- Towing Safety Advisory Committee
- Chemical Transportation Advisory Committee
- American Waterways Operators
- Passenger Vessel Association
- American Gaming Association
- Inland Rivers Ports and Terminals
- Barge Fleeting Representative
- River Industry Executive Task Force

The WRAMS plan serves as an umbrella plan for the Western Rivers Region into which all COTPs/FMSCs (Captains of the Ports/Federal Maritime Security Coordinators) have incorporated their AMS (Area Maritime Security) Plans as separate annexes. It specifies COTP/FMSC security procedures for all MARSEC (Maritime Security) levels.

The COTPs/FMSCs in the Western Rivers Region have formed twenty-one local AMS subcommittees to address maritime security issues throughout their zones. Like the WRAMS Committee these local committees are comprised of federal, state and local officials, as well as maritime industry representatives, whose purpose is to assist the COTP/FMSC in the development, review and update of AMS (Area Maritime Security) plans; to assist in communicating threats and changes in MARSEC levels; and to assist in disseminating appropriate security information to port stakeholders.

All COTPs/FMSCs must complete an AMS exercise for their respective zones by December 31, 2005. The Eighth Coast Guard District, the COTPs/FMSCs and the local AMS committees are presently engaged in planning the exercises that will test and evaluate their respective annexes in the WRAMS Plan.

Port of Vicksburg, Mississippi

There are eight Maritime Transportation Security Act (MTSA) regulated facilities in and around the Port of Vicksburg, Mississippi. All eight facilities have been inspected for compliance with 33 CFR 105, and have Coast Guard-approved Facility Security Plans.

Marine Safety Unit Baton Rouge has established an Area Maritime Security Committee in Vicksburg. Representatives from the Madison Parish Sheriff's Office (Louisiana side of the river), Warren County Sheriff's Office, Vicksburg Police Department, Facility Security Officers for all MTSA-regulated facilities, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, Warren County Office of Emergency Preparedness, and the Vicksburg Port Commission are all participating members of the Committee. Critical non-MTSA regulated facilities and infrastructure has been identified, assessed for risk, and mitigation strategies are in place with local law enforcement. MSU Baton Rouge Port Security planners also met with the security supervisor for the Grand Gulf Nuclear Power Plant located south of Vicksburg and conducted a tour of the facility to identify any potential maritime security concerns associated with the power plant.

Unclassified Field Intelligence Reports describing potential suspicious activity in and around infrastructure and facilities in Baton Rouge are shared with local law enforcement agencies in Vicksburg. This information is intended to heighten the awareness of the law enforcement community in Vicksburg and help them identify potential suspicious activity in their area worth reporting to the Coast Guard.

Two Public Access Facilities have been identified in the port area to accommodate MTSA-regulated passenger vessels that make routine port calls in the area. The Coast Guard has coordinated with the appropriate local law enforcement agencies and the passenger vessel operators to establish security mitigation procedures.

Boat launch facilities and logistics for accommodating Marine Safety Unit Baton Rouge's trailerable port security boat have been identified in the event Coast Guard port security patrol assets are ever needed to be deployed in the port.

Conclusion

In closing, the Coast Guard is dedicated to leading the way for maritime security and nowhere is that more true than in the Eighth District. It demands a coordinated effort and continued vigilance by all involved, and is a charge the Coast Guard and the men and women of the Eighth District are proudly meeting.